
225.75

Missed Appointments and Food Instruments (FIs)

Overview

Policy Contract agencies must establish written procedures for alternate means of issuing **benefits** when participants timely present adequate reasons for their inability to come to their scheduled appointment. These procedures are subject to approval of the state office.

Adequate reasons Adequate reasons for inability to appear in clinic include but are not limited to the following extenuating or extreme personal circumstances:

- A medically fragile parent/guardian/participant,
- A pregnant woman confined to bed,
- A death in the family, or
- Another family emergency.

Note: The contract agency may identify additional reasons considered adequate for inability to appear in clinic in their written procedures.

Providing notice to participants Contract agencies must communicate their missed appointment policy to all participants by written notice at certification and signage posted in the clinic. This communication must address at least the following points:

- The importance of notifying the local WIC agency as soon as possible;
- Whom the participant must notify (coordinator, agency staff or clinic staff); and
- Their options include rescheduling the appointment or arranging for a proxy who must also have an appointment.

Contract agency scheduling options Scheduling options for contract agencies to consider implementing to increase participant access to FIs when appointments are missed include:

- Reserving portions of or full days for “make-up days.”
- Offering early morning, noon hour, and late afternoon appointments to accommodate employed parents/guardians/participants.
- When several clinic days are scheduled each month, hold clinics in different parts of the month rather than consecutive days.

Alternatives for Missed Appointments

Notification on or before the clinic day

The table below lists the steps to follow when participants notify local agency staff on or before the day of their scheduled appointment.

Step	Action
1	Assess the reason for their inability to appear in clinic.
2	Offer to reschedule the appointment.
3	Remind the parent/guardian/participant about the option to designate a proxy and review how to do so.
4	If Steps 2 and 3 are not feasible or reasonable actions, issue one month of benefits and schedule an appointment for the following month when the remaining benefits can be issued. Complete a proration override if applicable; see policy 235.02 for more information on allowance.

Notification after the appointment

The table below lists the steps to follow when participants notify local agency staff after they missed their appointment.

Step	Action
1	Assess their reason for missing the appointment. <u>Note:</u> Do not issue benefits to participants who forgot their appointment.
2	Offer to reschedule the appointment.
3	Remind the parent/guardian/participant about the option to designate a proxy and review how to do so.
4	If Steps 2 and 3 are not feasible or reasonable actions AND the participant still has an adequate reason preventing their ability to appear in clinic, issue one month of benefits and schedule an appointment for the following month when the remaining benefits can be issued

Rescheduling appointments

Local agencies must offer another appointment to claim **benefits** before the month ends. This may mean offering an appointment in a community other than where the participant normally comes to clinic.

Example: A participant missed their appointment on October 28. Offer an appointment before the close of business on October 31. Beginning on November 1, November benefits will be issued so scheduling the appointment on or after that date will result in the loss of October benefits for the participant.